

NEWS Release

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

28910 Hwy 20 West • Hines, Oregon 97738 • <http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/burns>
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BLM
Burns District Office

BLM HONORS FORMER DISTRICT MANAGER HOWARD DELANO

HINES, Ore. – It’s a well-known fact: each year thousands of travelers top Steens Mountain in southeast Oregon. The deep glacial-carved gorges, stunning scenery, and wilderness experience bring visitors from across the country. With maintained access by way of the Steens Mountain Loop Road, even passenger cars can handle the journey making the Steens a hard place to resist. What you might not know is that Howard DeLano, former Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Burns District Manager, played in key role in development of the ‘Loop Road’ and the access we all enjoy today.

DeLano began a career of public land management in 1939 with the BLM’s predecessor, the Federal Grazing Service, in Burns, Oregon. His service spanned a total of 34 years, several of which were spent in Burns, including five years as District Manager from 1953 to 1957. At that time, there was a rough pattern of road reaching from Frenchglen to the top of Steens Mountain, and no further.

DeLano said, “The ungraded rock road was used only by local stockmen, fishermen, hunters, and landowners. We had a surplus Army 4-wheel drive Doge Power Wagon, but Steens Mountain was mostly inaccessible to the general public with standard automobiles.”

With multiple-use principles in mind, and the uniqueness and beauty of Steens Mountain too great to pass up, DeLano set forth with a years-long plan to acquire funding for a better road. During DeLano’s last year as a BLM District Manager, Congress granted a substantial funding for the project. DeLano’s successors used these funds to improve the road on the north side and newly establish the south route using the Big Blitzen drainage. This is where the “Loop Road” concept really took shape, and access to Steens Mountain was forever changed.

A commemorative plaque honoring DeLano’s work is located at the Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Area turnout along the north Loop Road. The public is encouraged to join in a celebration of DeLano’s achievements on Friday, October 16 at 12:00 noon at Page Springs Campground on Steens Mountain. The celebration will include a short plaque dedication ceremony and light beverages and dessert.

For more information on the dedication ceremony, or to RSVP, contact Tara Martinak with the BLM at (541) 573-4519.

About the BLM

The BLM manages more land – 256 million surface acres – than any other Federal agency. Most of this public land is located in 12 Western States, including Alaska. The Bureau, with a budget of about \$1.8 billion, also administers 700 million acres of subsurface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM’s multiple-use mission is to sustain the health and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The Bureau accomplishes this by managing such activities as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, mineral development, and energy production, and by conserving natural, historical, and cultural resources on the public lands.

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